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JOINT COUNCIL NOTES

JOINT COUNCIL ON FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES

Secretariat:
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COUNCIL WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

Three new members were welcomed to the Council by Cochairman Bertrand: James H. Anderson, Dean of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Michigan State University, who will serve as Cochairman; Alvin I. Thomas, President, Prairie View A&M University; Dawson Johns, farmer, Homer, Louisiana.

SECRETARY BLOCK POSES QUESTIONS TO JOINT COUNCIL

Secretary Block asked the Joint Council sixteen questions relating to his priority concerns in agricultural research, extension, and teaching. Council workgroups formulated responses to these questions during the July meeting. Questions and answers are available from Room 351-A, Administration Building, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 20250.

COUNCIL MEETS WITH RAY LETT AND UNDER AND ASSISTANT SECRETARIES

On July 17, the Council met with the Secretary's top staff to discuss issues relating to their various programs and review their suggestions for needed research and education programs.

Ray Lett, Executive Assistant to the Secretary -- Policy Formation in the Department

- Lett emphasized the interest of the Secretary and himself in agricultural research and extension programs, their experience with both, and their interest in the goals and objectives of the Joint Council.
- To deal with policy issues within the Department, the Secretary is putting in place a series of committees that comprise the Secretary's Policy and Coordination Council. This structure will enable the Secretary to receive input from the USDA agencies as well as public groups and to relay that input, where appropriate, to the President's Cabinet Council on Food and Agriculture.
- The Joint Council will be the Secretary's major public advisory board for agricultural research and education. Also, the Director of Science and Education, as chairman of the Science and Education Committee, will be responsible for highlighting Joint Council concerns and priority issues in sessions of this committee and with the full Policy and Coordinating Council.

John Ford, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Marketing and Transportation

- Ford reviewed agencies that report to Bill McMillan, Assistant Secretary for Marketing and Transportation: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service; Office of

Transportation; Agricultural Marketing Service; Food Safety and Inspection Service; Agricultural Cooperative Service; Federal Grain Inspection Service; Packers and Stockyards. He encouraged the Council to share thoughts and suggestions with Mr. McMillan regarding research and education.

Frank Naylor, Under Secretary for Small Community and Rural Development

- By crop year 1982, Naylor hopes to bring together a coordinated, local, peer group-monitored effort to encourage the development of new family farm and ranch enterprises.
- Under this plan, a county New Farmers Committee (composed of representatives from the Extension Service, ASCS, SCS, farm credit, and farm commodity groups) would be a focal point for referral of potentially successful new farmers. This committee would review and evaluate individuals, help them develop a five-year plan, and provide ongoing assistance. Farmers Home would provide initial financing with the goal of having the enterprise fully independent and on commercial credit in five to ten years. Extension will be looked to for leadership.
- Naylor cited that the necessary research to determine how to effectively assist new farmers and ranchers and assure their highest potential for success has not been done.

Seeley Lodwick, Under Secretary for International Affairs and Commodity Programs

- Lodwick's responsibilities include four agencies: Agriculture Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS); Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS); Office of International Cooperation and Development (OICD) and Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC).
- Lodwick asked the Council's advice on the best use of taxpayers' dollars to implement soil conservation (ASCS) and to continue international agricultural exchange programs(OICD).
- In the Federal Crop Insurance area, research to reduce claims is needed (i.e., soybeans that would recover quickly from hail storm damage).
- Research and Extension input is needed to discover how to produce energy at a lower price, reduce farm energy being used, and, thus, increase net farm income.

Bill Lesher, Assistant Secretary for Economics

- Lesher's responsibilities include the Economic Research Service (ERS); the Statistical Reporting Service (SRS) and the Agricultural World Outlook Board.
- Lesher sees a priority need for quality, objective, professional economic research to be conducted by the Department, coordinated with activities in the physical sciences.
- He seeks to coordinate efforts with the Director of Science and Education and to hear comments from the Joint Council regarding economics research priorities.

Richard Siegel, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment

- Siegel stated that responsibilities of John Crowell, Assistant Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment, include the Soil Conservation Service and the Forest Service.
- Siegel cited the need for increased research on effective use of scarce water resources (automated irrigation systems); conservation tillage practices; and issues that relate to soil loss vs productivity.
- Forest Service research needs reflect regional differences: (a) Western -- range productivity, water efficiency, pest management; (b) North Central and Southern -- forest regeneration; (c) Northeastern -- market potential of hardwoods; abandoned strip mines. The Madison, Wisconsin, Forest Products Lab is interested in post-harvest issues, i.e., effective, efficient use of wood in home construction; development of by-products.

John Bode, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Food and Consumer Services

- Bode highlighted agencies that now report to Mary Jarratt, Assistant Secretary for Food and Consumer Services: Food and Nutrition Service (Food Stamp Program, Child Nutrition Programs); Human Nutrition Information Service (formed from the Food and Nutrition Information Center, Consumer Nutrition Center; Nutrition Information, Dietary Guidance Staff).
- The Human Nutrition Information Service (HNIS) was established as a result of the recent reorganization. It will continue to perform the research and surveys that have contributed to understanding the nutritional status of the American population.
- New HNIS initiatives will be determined in cooperation with the new Director, who will soon be hired. Current efforts underway include: improving methods used in the nationwide food consumption survey; special analyses of the 1977-78 Food Consumption Survey; nutrition education research in four areas: eating patterns, food guidance, nutrition information, community nutrition education research.

PAARLBURG ADDRESSES COUNCIL

Dr. Don Paarlberg, Professor Emeritus, Purdue University, addressed the luncheon session on Thursday, July 16. In his remarks on research and education in agriculture, Paarlberg noted:

- Contrary to "conventional wisdom," agricultural productivity is not leveling off and declining. When rates of change in total outputs, inputs, and productivity in American agriculture are examined, continued improvement in the efficiency of agricultural production is shown. This is particularly evident when contrasted with the decline in productivity in the non-agriculture sector.
- Experiment Station funding has diminished over time, where funding for other agencies and organizations doing related research has increased. This is due to a variety of factors.

- Previously, the two functions of Land-Grant colleges (research and education) were mutually reinforcing -- research was neatly related to the function of training agricultural scientists. There was an enormous flow of new information and costs of doing research were lower.
- Now, however, new knowledge is more difficult to attain. Research dollars are going to institutions with a strong mission orientation, a multi-disciplinary team, large budgets, and extended time commitments. This represents a divergence from the traditional teaching/training role of Land-Grant colleges.
- The Land-Grant system must cope with this new environment by developing a mission orientation approach and incorporating it into the teaching/training function, or choosing to concentrate only on the teaching/training role.

COUNCIL ADOPTS PROGRAM STRUCTURE FOR THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES

The Joint Council has adopted a comprehensive program structure for the U. S. Food and Agriculture Science and Education system. Program Categories will include:

- I. NATURAL RESOURCES (Land, Water and Air, Forests, Range and Wildlife)
- II. PRODUCTION AND PROTECTION (Plant Production, Plant Protection, Animal Production, Animal Protection, Production Systems)
- III. PROCESSING, MARKETING AND DISTRIBUTION (Food Systems, Non-food Systems, Food Quality and Safety)
- IV. PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES (Human Nutrition and Consumer Programs, Individual and Family Development, Community and Rural Development)
- V. AGRICULTURAL POLICY (Agriculture and Food Policy, Demand and Supply)
- VI. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION AND PROGRAM SUPPORT (Technical Information Systems, Administrative and Financial Support, Facilities Support, Expertise Development)

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON ENERGY MAKES RECOMMENDATIONS

The Joint Council Ad Hoc Committee on Energy has submitted a paper to the Secretary of Agriculture recommending that (a) the Secretary make a clear statement regarding the interest of the USDA in energy; (b) the Secretary seek White House approval to make direct budget requests for energy programs vs obtaining pass-through funds through the Department of Energy; (c) a Departmental energy coordinating committee be established; (d) the USDA reexamine technologies currently in place with the goal of reducing dependence on petrochemical energy; (e) the Secretary have direct input into policy issues that may have another department as a primary focal point, i.e., Department of Interior's Office of Water Research and Technology; (f) manpower must be developed for future energy programs, i.e., agricultural engineering.

INCREASING PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE AND EDUCATION

The Joint Council voted to guide the development of a brochure describing the role and importance of the research and education system in assuring a secure food supply for the future.

The Council discussed ongoing activities by ECOP, ESCOP, and RICOP in this area, and the importance of coordinating with these efforts.

REGIONAL COUNCIL UPDATES

The Northeast Regional Council's September meeting will focus on (1) energy, (2) animal health, and (3) a work plan for the Council. Regional committees for extension and teaching will hold initial meetings in the fall; the regional research committee is fully operational.

The North Central Regional Council's April 23 meeting dealt with (1) concerns of the Joint Council and the National Higher Education, Agricultural Research, and Extension Committees; (2) plans for regional committees; (3) the future of human resources in agricultural extension, teaching and research; and (4) future plans for the North Central Regional Council.

The research committee will be the only one of the three regional committees to be formally organized in the North Central Region.

The Western Regional Council will focus on rangeland issues in the coming year. They may also sponsor a Conference on Exports to be held in the Western Region. Three committees for research, extension, and teaching are functioning under the aegis of the WRC.

The Southern Regional Council will meet in the fall. All three regional committees have been appointed but have not met.

NATIONAL COMMITTEE UPDATES

The National Agricultural Research Committee will meet October 1-2 in Washington, D. C. They will hear a progress report on the technology assessment of corn and discuss the budget process and the relationship of NARC to professional societies.

The National Extension Committee met June 18-19 and adopted two statements for submission to the Joint Council. The first proposes that the Secretary of Agriculture formulate policy concerning the coordination and usage of computer technology in national Extension programs and that the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP) create, in cooperation with the Administrator of the Extension Service, USDA, a task force to review and to develop a course of action designed to establish a national Extension computer center. The second reflects the committee's concern for the adequacy of the research base for Extension programs.

The National Higher Education Committee has identified members for the Workgroup on Food and Agricultural Education Information Systems (Jay Hughes, Dean, College of Forestry and Natural Resources, Colorado State University, chair) and the Workgroup on the National Assessment of Curricula in the Food and Agricultural Sciences (John Brand, Associate Dean and Director of Resident Instruction, University of Connecticut, chair).

Incorporating the issues of energy and water in instructional programs will be an agenda item at the November meeting of the National Committee on Higher Education.

DISCUSSION WITH EXTENSION, EXPERIMENT STATION, AND RESIDENT INSTRUCTION COMMITTEES ON POLICY

The Extension Committee on Policy is participating in a long-range planning effort, sponsored by the USDA and NASULGC, called "Extension in the Eighties" that will clarify Extension's policies, mission, and scope.

ECOP is concerned about increasing demands being placed on a declining number of staff; the ability of Extension to obtain, develop, and hold competent staff; and professional development for staff members.

ECOP feels that increased effort and resources must go into the effectiveness and efficiency of extension communications -- internally and with the public. Additional emphasis must be placed on computerization, electronic mail, etc., so that less staff can communicate more expediently with increasing clientele.

The Experiment Station Committee on Policy believes that we must rely upon strong State research programs to remain closely aware of State research needs. ESCOP also sees the need for an overview agency such as Science and Education with knowledge of and interest in both the State and Federal agricultural research systems.

In 1980, ESCOP produced a report called Research and the Family Farm. Committees are also working on the manpower issue (jointly with RICOP) and on agricultural exports. Subcommittee activities relate to animal welfare, DNA and genetic engineering, pesticide impacts, computers, structure of agriculture. Effort will also be devoted to socializing Congress, the general public, etc., to the benefits of agricultural research.

The Resident Instruction Committee on Policy has three major concerns regarding teaching in agricultural higher education: (a) projected manpower shortages, (b) the need for recognition and increased funding of higher education at the national level, (c) the need for a comprehensive data base for higher education.

RICOP is concerned that, although the 1977 Farm Bill mandated the role of USDA in agricultural higher education, due to lack of funding, it never came to fruition. RICOP would like to see a strong national voice for higher education in agriculture.

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